

Case No.: ROPTK-005A

PACKAGE WITH REMOVABLE DECALS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] Not Applicable

STATEMENT RE: FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The present invention relates generally to product packaging and more specifically to product packaging with removable decals incorporated as part of the product packaging.

[0004] Product packaging typically contains artwork, such as pictures of the product, logos, etc. Such artwork typically is colored and is costly to manufacture. Once the packaging is opened, the package and therefore the artwork is typically discarded. Thus, the consumer pays more for the product due to the packaging which is typically discarded once the product is removed from the package. Although expensive to manufacture, such artwork on packaging is desirable as it is used to attract consumers as well as provide easy product recognition and identification.

[0005] Based on the above, there is a need for product packaging that includes graphics (artwork) where the cost of such graphics is not wasted due to the temporary nature of such packaging.

[0006] Many consumers collect various decals which may be associated with a particular company and/or product. For example, consumers may purchase stickers that have a logo for a band, a cartoon character, a sports figure, etc. Such stickers may be sold separately or may be included in a package along with a purchased product. For example, a children's action figure may have stickers depicting the action figure included in the package or a compact disc (CD) may have stickers relating to a band (e.g., band name or photos) included in the

packaging of the band's CD. A packager must ensure that any and all appropriate decals are included in a given package. Such a process is typically done by hand and is therefore time consuming and therefore relatively expensive.

[0007] Based on the above, there is also a need for a cost-efficient method of ensuring that appropriate decals are included along with a particular product.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] A package having removable decals integrated into the package and a method of forming the package having removable decals integrated into the package are disclosed herein. The package has an inner layer, a liner layer and an outer layer. The inner layer has an inner layer inner surface and an inner layer outer surface. The liner layer has a liner layer inner surface and a liner layer outer surface. The outer layer has an outer layer inner surface and an outer layer outer surface. The liner layer inner surface is adhered to the inner layer outer surface. The outer layer inner surface is adhered to the liner layer outer surface. The outer layer outer surface has at least one decorative area. At least one removable decal is formed by cutting a perimeter around the at least one decorative area into the outer layer. The at least one removable decal has a non-sticky top surface and a sticky bottom surface. The sticky bottom surface is adhered to the liner layer outer surface. The at least one removable decal can be removed from the liner layer and affixed to an external object.

[0009] The package may have a protective covering removably surrounding the outer layer outer surface. The protective covering may be a shrink wrap covering.

[0010] The package inner layer may be formed from a single sheet of material.

[0011] The package inner layer may be made from a cardboard material.

[0012] The outer layer may be made from a vinyl material. The outer layer outer surface may be glossy.

[0013] The liner layer may be made from a plastic-based material or from a paper-based material.

[0014] The at least one removable decal is may be formed using kiss-cutting.

[0015] The package described above may be manufactured using the steps of: (a) providing an inner layer having an inner layer inner surface and an inner layer outer surface; (b) providing a liner layer having a liner layer inner surface and a liner layer outer surface;

(c) providing an outer layer having an outer layer inner surface and an outer layer outer surface, the outer layer outer surface having at least one decorative area; (d) adhering the liner layer inner surface to the inner layer outer surface; (e) adhering the outer layer inner surface to the liner layer outer surface; and (f) forming at least one removable decal by cutting a perimeter around the at least one decorative area, the at least one removable being removable such that the removable decal can be affixed to an external object.

[0016] The method may also include the step of wrapping a protective covering around the outer layer outer surface. The protective covering may be a shrink wrap covering.

[0017] The inner layer, may be formed from a single sheet of material. If so, the method may also include after (d) and (e); folding the adhered inner layer, liner layer and outer layer into a desired package shape; and securing the folded inner layer, liner layer and outer layer in the desired package shape.

[0018] Forming the at least one removable decal by cutting a perimeter around the at least one decorative area may be done using kiss-cutting.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] These as well as other features of the present invention will become more apparent upon reference to the drawings wherein:

[0020] Figure 1 is a front view of a package having removable decal(s) on the package;

[0021] Figure 2 is a back view of the package of Figure 1 (rotated 180°) having removable decal(s) on the package;

[0022] Figure 3 is a cross sectional view of the package of Figure 1 taken along line 3 and showing a removable decal on the front (top) of the package with the decal in the process of being removed from the package;

[0023] Figure 3A is an exploded view of the section taken about line 3 in Figure 3;

[0024] Figure 4 is a cross sectional view of the package shown in Figure 3 with the removable decal removed; and

[0025] Figure 5 is a view of the package shown in Figures 1 and 2 which is formed of a single sheet of material and is shown before the single sheet of material is folded to form the package shown in Figures 1 and 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0026] A package 10 and method of manufacturing the package 10 are disclosed herein. The package 10 incorporates decals 12A, 12B, 12C into the finished package. This reduces printing and paper costs, eliminates labor costs associated with packaging decals in a package along with another product and also ensures that every customer receives decals with every shipment.

[0027] The package 10 includes artwork (decals) 12A, 12B, 12C and therefore has a similar appearance as typical product packaging. However, the artwork (decals) 12A, 12B, 12C on the package are removable decals. Thus, the consumer can remove the decals 12A, 12B, 12C from the package 10 and adhere the decals 12A, 12B, 12C to an object, such as, a wall, a vehicle bumper, a notebook, etc. Thus, if the consumer discards the product packaging, the expense of the artwork for the product packaging is not wasted as the consumer can reuse the artwork (decals).

[0028] Referring now to the drawings wherein the showings are for purposes of illustrating preferred embodiments of the present invention only, and not for purposes of limiting the same, Figure 1 shows a top or front 14 of a package 10. The package 10 has an outer surface that includes removable decals 12A, 12B, 12C. Figure 2 shows a bottom or back 16 of the package 10 which is opposite the top or front 14 of the package 10 shown in Figure 1.

[0029] In exemplary embodiments, the outer surface of the package 10 includes areas having decals 12A, 12B, 12C as well as areas of the package that do not include decals 20. As discussed further below, in exemplary embodiments, a conventional sticker/decal material is affixed over the entire outer surface of an inner package material. The conventional sticker/decal material includes a backing and a sticker portion releasably adhered to the backing. The sticker portion is typically a glossy vinyl material. However, it will be appreciated that the sticker portion may be a matte material.

[0030] As best seen in Figures 3, 3A and 4, the package 10 includes three layers. The first (inner) layer 28 is made of conventional package material which may be a paper-based material (e.g., heavy cardstock or cardboard) or a plastic-based material. This first (inner) layer 28 has an inner surface 30 and an outer surface 32. The inner surface forms the inside of the package.

[0031] The inner layer 28 has two layers adhered to it. These two layers comprise removable, self-adhesive, die cut decals that are built into the outer printed surface of the product packaging. These two layers are: (1) a liner layer 18; and (2) an outer layer 29. In exemplary embodiments, the liner layer 18 is a paper-based or plastic-based removable liner material that is adhered over the entire surface of the first (inner) layer of the package. The liner layer 18 has an inner surface 34 and an outer surface 36. The inner surface 34 of the liner layer is adhered to the outer surface 32 of the inner layer. The liner layer 18 may be adhered to the inner layer 28 using any known or future means conventionally used for such a purpose, for example, the liner layer may be glued to the inner layer.

[0032] In exemplary embodiments, the outer layer 29 is a vinyl based printed decal material which may have a glossy or a matte finish. The outer layer has an inner surface 38 and an outer surface 40. The inner surface 38 of the outer layer is adhered to the outer surface 36 of the liner layer. The outer surface 36 of the liner layer is a releasable liner material. The outer layer 29 includes decals 12A, 12B, 12C which can be removed from the releasable liner outer surface of the liner layer 36.

[0033] In exemplary embodiments, the decals (stickers) 12A, 12B, 12C are formed by kiss cutting the perimeter of the decal. The kiss-cutting can be done using any conventional technique currently known or developed in the future. For example, the kiss-cutting may be done using laser kiss cutting which is a process in which the top layer of a material can be cut without cutting through an attached material. Sticker labels are an example of a product that is kiss cut. The outline of the label can be cut without cutting the release (back) base material.

[0034] In exemplary embodiments, such as shown in the figures, the packaging is constructed from a single sheet (of the two layers). After the decals are cut, the packaging is folded and/or sealed, e.g., using glue, to create the package. In the example shown, the single sheet has all of the layers including the layer with the decals 12A, 12B, 12C cut into the desired shape. The sheet is then folded resulting in the package shown in Figures 1 and 2. The embodiment shown in Figure 5 creates a substantially flat package having an opening 26 at one end. One side of the package includes a flap 22 which fits into a slot 24 on the opposing side of the package. In order to close the package, the flap 22 is folded along a pre-folded edge and inserted into the slot 24. The flap 22 is removed from the slot 24 in order to

open the package so that contents can be placed into and removed from the package. In the embodiment shown, the sheet shown in Figure 5 is folded along a center segment 30. Side flap 32 and end flap 34 are folded so that they are tucked inside the package. The side flap 32 and end flap 34 are secured, e.g., using glue.

[0035] In other embodiments, the two-layer decal material can be mounted to a thicker and/or stiffer substrate to produce a more rugged package or box.

[0036] In order to construct a single-sheet package 10 such as the one shown in the figures, the inner material (such as cardboard) is cut to the desired shape, such as the one shown in Figure 5. The releasable liner layer is adhered to the outer surface of the inner material, e.g., using glue or some other type of adhesive. The outer vinyl layer is adhered to the releasable liner layer. The outer vinyl layer includes graphics. Some or all of the graphics are kiss cut so that the decals can be removed from the release liner. If applicable, the package is folded, e.g., to form the package shown in Figures 1 and 2. The folded package is then sealed where the open edges meet, e.g., by using glue or some other conventional technique now known or developed in the future. The package 10 shown in the figures is relatively flat and has a flap 22 for closing the package. After the package is formed as shown in Figures 1 and 2, the product is placed in the envelope-like package 10. The package is then closed by folding the flap the package proximate the flap 22 (e.g., along line 23) and inserting the flap 22 into a slot 24.

[0037] In exemplary embodiments, the package 10 is covered with a protective material, such as a clear shrink wrap material. Such a protective coating prevents the removable stickers from being damaged or removed prior to purchase by a consumer.

[0038] Additional modifications and improvements of the present invention may also be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Thus, the particular combination of parts described and illustrated herein is intended to represent only a certain embodiment of the present invention, and is not intended to serve as a limitation of alternative devices within the spirit and scope of the invention.